TPCB Student Town Hall

Mental Health & Wellness
Diversity & Inclusion

November 22, 2021

TPCB Student Town Hall – November 2021
Agenda

A. Introduction

B. Mental Health & Wellness Resources
   Patricia Marino, MD – Weill Cornell Graduate School
   Nisha Mehta-Naik, MD – Rockefeller University
   Chanchal Sharma, PsyD – Memorial Sloan Kettering

C. Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Programs
   Roxana Mesias, PhD – Weill Cornell Graduate School
   Ilana Kotliar – Tri-Institutional Outreach Committee

D. TPCB Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Update

E. TPCB Climate Survey Results

F. Open Discussion
B. Mental Health & Wellness Resources

Support services are available to all TPCB students

TPCB Intranet
https://chembio.triiprograms.org/about-tpcb/intranet/#studentsupport

Judith Cukor, PhD
Assistant Dean, Student Affairs
Weill Cornell Graduate School

Patricia Marino, MD
Director, Student Mental Health
Weill Cornell Graduate School

Nisha Mehta-Naik, MD
Onsite Psychiatrist
Rockefeller University

Chanchal Sharma, PsyD
Assistant Attending Psychologist
MSK Employee Health & Wellness

C. Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Programs

Our Diversity is Our Strength

TPCB Intranet
https://chembio.triiprograms.org/about-tpcb/intranet/#diversity

Roxana Mesias, PhD
Diversity Program Manager
Weill Cornell Graduate School

Yasmin Carrasco, PhD
Assistant Dean, Diversity & Student Life
Weill Cornell Graduate School

Yaihara Fortis-Santiago, PhD
Associate Director, Postdoc Affairs & Trainee Diversity Initiatives, MSK

Jeanne Garbarino, PhD
Director, Science Outreach
Rockefeller University

arriving Nov 29, 2021
D. TPCB Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Update

TPCB has a long track record of promoting student diversity...

TPCB Student Diversity (last 10 years)

- 23% URM students (16% national average)
- 22% URM graduates (12% national average)
- ≥5% Disadvantaged (NIH policy change 2019)
- 12% with self-identified disabilities (6.7% natl avg)
- 36% International students (6 continents)

TPCB Call to Action – June 12, 2020

- 10 concrete, actionable proposals
- Efforts already in place but not visible enough:
  - public statements on racism & mental health, URM recruitment, fee waivers, speakers ≥50% women, faculty training (mentorship, diversity, inclusion)
- New efforts launched:
  - webpage, resource docs (mental health, diversity, childcare, career dev), RCR module pilot, speakers ≥20% URM, TPCB Orientation meetings, TPCB Orientation Committee, TPCB Peer Mentoring, HSI recruiting, ChBSP URM slots, Open House (preferred pronouns, diversity session, international mixer), TPCB Outreach, TPCB Retreat discussions, TPCB Climate Surveys, TPCB Town Halls

D. TPCB Diversity, Inclusion & Outreach Update

…but we ALL must do more

Our Philosophy

- I have made mistakes, I apologize, I continue to work to learn, grow, and improve
- TPCB leadership enacts change at program level & advocates for change at institutional level
- TPCB supports and enables students to effect change at all levels
- Everyone must commit to this effort personally and professionally

Upcoming Events and Efforts

(some in response to 2021 Climate Survey feedback)

- TPCB Holiday Party – authorized as of Nov 18, 2021!
- TPCB Student Retreat – rescheduled for May 4-5, 2022!
- Director to check in individually with students more regularly
- Outreach programs (TORC, TIMI) to be highlighted on our website
- TPCB Peer Mentoring program to be expanded and highlighted on our website
- TPCB International Student Group to be launched
- Further discussions of how to provide metrics for graduation
- PLEASE contact Derek directly at any time with concerns, suggestions, proposals
Climate Survey Overview

• Survey based on MSK HR survey circulated institution-wide in 2020
• Customized for TPCB in consultation with diversity program staff & students
• Specifically focused on inclusion, of all types, at the TPCB program level
• We do not address *equity* explicitly, but its importance is recognized in questions regarding support for students
• Survey opened Oct 14, 2021, closed Oct 29, 2021
• 35 out of 51 students completed survey (69%)
• Survey results have been summarized to faculty

Takehome Messages

• Most respondants generally view TPCB diversity & inclusion positively
• However, more importantly, several view TPCB diversity & inclusion negatively
• TPCB has and continues to work to address the specific comments raised
• We need everyone to contribute to this effort (7 committed to own actions (14%))
• PLEASE come to Derek directly to discuss how best to address your concerns

E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey 2021

*Key definitions*

**DIVERSITY** is defined as the traits and characteristics that make people unique.

**INCLUSION** is defined as the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome.

**SOCIAL IDENTITY** is defined as a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s), e.g., racial or ethnic background, nationality or citizenship, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability status, marital or parental status, socioeconomic status or background.
### E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

#### Current TPCB culture

**Current TPCB culture embraces a:**

1. **...diverse student body.**
   - 2021: 4.31, 2020: 4.50
   - **Aggregated Comments:**
     1) Our student body is not significantly diverse [but responded: ‘Agree Somewhat’]
   - 2021: 4.00
   - 2020: 4.29

2. **...inclusive environment.**
   - **Aggregated Comments:**
     2) Our program has an extroverted ideal; different working styles and personalities should be accepted
   - 2021: 4.29
   - 2020: 4.29

3. **...supportive environment.**
   - 2021: 4.31, 2020: 4.29
   - **Aggregated Comments:**
     3) What support has been provided to students during COVID-19? Has anyone checked in on students? No.
   - 2021: 4.29
   - 2020: 4.24

4. **Everyone in TPCB has an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of background.**
   - 2021: 4.17, 2020: 4.47
   - **Aggregated Comments:**
     4) Program could do more to address “hidden curriculum” in academia in general and TPCB in particular.
   - 2021: 4.17
   - 2020: 4.47

5. **There is open and honest two-way communication about diversity and inclusion in TPCB.**
   - 2021: 4.17, 2020: 4.47
   - **Aggregated Comments:**
     5) Needs to come from PIs, not just TPCB & students; leadership needs to be educated and care about D&I.
   - 2021: 4.17
   - 2020: 4.47

#### Aggregated Comments:

1) Our student body is not significantly diverse [but responded: ‘Agree Somewhat’]
2) Our program has an extroverted ideal; different working styles and personalities should be accepted
3) What support has been provided to students during COVID-19? Has anyone checked in on students? No.
3) We don’t really do anything as a program anymore since COVID began; I feel like I’m never reached out to.
3) Students could be supported more beyond Years 1-2; provide rubrics for graduation to benchmark progress
4) Program could do more to address “hidden curriculum” in academia in general and TPCB in particular.

#### TPCB responsiveness and commitment

**TPCB responds effectively to incidents of racism and discrimination in the community.**

- 2021: 4.23, 2020: 4.56
- **Aggregated Comments:**
  7) Program administration does a good job.
  8) I often can’t find what’s going on.

**TPCB demonstrates a visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.**

- 2021: 4.43, 2020: 4.53
- **Aggregated Comments:**
  7) TPCB responds effectively to incidents of racism and discrimination in the community.
  8) TPCB demonstrates a visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.

**I am aware of the diversity and inclusion resources that are available to me.**

- 2021: 4.29
- 2020: 4.29
- **Aggregated Comments:**
  9) I am aware of the diversity and inclusion resources that are available to me.

**I am aware of the disability services resources that are available to me.**

- 2021: 3.97, 2020: 4.26
- **Aggregated Comments:**
  10) I actually not sure, and it would be helpful if this was better emphasized.

**I know where to report incidents of discrimination, bias, or harassment.**

- 2021: 3.74
- 2020: 4.26
- **Aggregated Comments:**
  11) Not sure where to report, but would never report if I were in this situation for fear of retaliation / negative consequences for my PhD; not sure what the solution for this would be, either.
E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

Fair treatment in the TPCB program

At the TPCB program level, everyone is treated fairly, regardless of:

12) race or ethnicity.

13) nationality or citizenship.

14) religion.

15) sex assigned at birth, gender identity, or gender expression.

16) sexual orientation.

Aggregated Comments:

13) Hard to do because of national laws but that's not TPCBs fault!

17) age

18) disability status.

19) marital or parental status.

20) socioeconomic status or background.

Aggregated Comments:

20) Do we have people from working class/lower class backgrounds in the program? Everyone seems middle class+
E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

Value as an individual

I feel valued as an individual by…

21) …TPCB leadership.

22) …other TPCB students.

23) …my research group.

24) …my PI(s).

2021 n=35 2020 n=34

Aggregated Comments:
none

Social identity

Social identity is defined as a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s), e.g., racial or ethnic background, nationality or citizenship, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability status, marital or parental status, socioeconomic status or background.

22) There are aspects of my social identity that I keep separate from academic & prof life.

23) I hesitate to provide scientific feedback to others from different social identity groups.

24) I feel that people in TPCB assume I am less skilled because of my social identity.

25) I feel that people in TPCB treat me negatively based on my social identity.

26) I worry my successes & failures will be used to judge others in my social identity group(s).

Aggregated Comments:
none
E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

Disability status

Social identity is defined as a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s), e.g., racial or ethnic background, nationality or citizenship, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability status, marital or parental status, socioeconomic status or background.

27) I am uncomfortable discussing my disability status with people I interact with in TPCB (skip if not applicable)

Aggregated Comments:

none

Are there any experiences you would like to share regarding diversity and inclusion in TPCB?

Aggregated Comments:

• I commend TPCB for being proactive about recognizing and addressing issues of diversity and inclusion within the program and wider society. There are concrete aspects I can point to - climate survey, diversity statement on website, town hall, support for student groups spanning the Tri-I focused on DEIJ, encouragement of outreach programs, etc. that demonstrate the commitment of TPCB to diversity and inclusion. I think TPCB leadership is open to continuously learning and working to improve the program - this is not to be taken for granted as other institutional leaders can truly be very stubborn about addressing these matters.

• Derek does a great job of making time to talk to you if you need to and help as much as he can with addressing concerns regarding issues of discrimination at the Tri-I.

• I have enjoyed meeting a variety of people from diverse backgrounds, both in life experiences and scientific experiences.
E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

Recommended changes in TPCB

What should TPCB consider changing (doing less of, more of, or differently) in support of diversity and inclusion?

Aggregated Comments:

- A social aspect of our program has definitely been lost due to the pandemic. It is difficult to meet, welcome and support the incoming class and one another, can we work on this?
- More program-wide social events.
- We never gather as a program so how do you promote D&I when we never see each other?
- Have more honest discussions about mental health & how COVID-19 is impacting students - help end depression/anxiety stigmas.
- I worry that TPCB supports the idea of diversity, but is unwilling to take risks or make short term sacrifices in the interests of increasing diversity within the program or the scientific community at large. It feels like because TPCB is a new program, it is more concerned with earning the respect of other institutions than with creating its own unique and inclusive brand.
- One issue that is particularly important is inclusivity of international students. Although TPCB recruits internationally, the support for international students when they arrive on campus could be stronger. It might be helpful to have a TPCB international student support group to help students when they transition to the US. There are many aspects of life that US citizens might take for granted (e.g., constant concern for visa status, perpetual monitoring of US/international relations news, how to set up a US bank account, how to access a doctor/psychologist, infrequent trips home, etc.) for which older international students can be a great resource. It may be helpful to foster such community within TPCB a bit more.
- A "steps to thesis" rubric would be nice; benchmarking progress to expectations can be an equalizer.
- Advertisement to more undergraduate institutions with a large URM population
- Keep hiring more female and POC faculty and inviting them to give seminars!

E. TPCB Diversity & Inclusion Climate Survey

Actions you will take

What actions will you take to help make TPCB a more inclusive program that values differences?

Aggregated Comments:

- While TPCB claims to value differences, in practice this is not the case. Differences are tolerated so long as they don't affect performance in the lab. Being inclusive of differences means accepting how those differences will affect a person's performance in the lab. The messaging from the program is basically: "It's okay to be different, so long as in the lab you act like a cis, straight, white man who has a wife at home doing all the housework and tending to the children." Not everyone can work the hours that are expected with the efficiency that is expected. And that has to be okay.
- DEI & mentoring training, discussing issues with my cohort & admin.
- Becoming more educated on my own biases.
- Being an open-minded person who doesn't judge others; continued involvement in outreach efforts.
- Continue to engage in outreach work and help to recruit diverse & excellent students every year.
- As an upperclassman, I believe it is important to make sure all students feel welcomed, supportive, and included irrespective of our differences. I am committed to doing my best to foster an inclusive environment as well as continuing to have DEIJ-focused discussions with my peers in the program.
- Ensuring that I speak and get to know all students, especially in my cohort.
- I will continue to treat everyone as equals. No matter someone's gender, race, or other identifications, I will treat everyone with respect in both social and professional environments.
F. Open Discussion

What did we miss? Where do we go from here?